

S-71

Rehoboth Presbyterian Church  
Rehoboth  
Public worship

1706

Rehoboth Presbyterian Church, perhaps the most-noted religious site in Somerset County, is a single-story Flemish bond brick structure erected in 1706 on land owned at that time by Reverend Francis Makemie, the designated father of American Presbyterianism. Having arrived in Somerset County at the request of Colonel William Stevens, Francis Makemie organized the Rehoboth, Accomac and the Manokin congregations during the late seventeenth century. Although Makemie lived in Accomac County, he served the Rehoboth congregation occasionally until his death in 1708.

Originally the rectangular brick church had two double doors on the south side, and the interior was fitted with box pews and a pulpit on the north wall. Subsequent alterations have reoriented the church on an east/west axis with the entrance in the west gable end. In addition to the Flemish bond brick walls, another distinctive early feature is the kick to each eave. When the church was first remodeled in 1888, the interior was refitted with Victorian pews which faced east. Finally in 1954 and 1955, the church was partially restored by the Boston architectural firm of Perry, Shaw, Hepburn and Dean.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:
Maryland
COUNTY:
Somerset
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE

1. NAME			
COMMON:			
Rehobeth Presbyterian Church			
AND/OR HISTORIC:			
Rehobeth Presbyterian Church			
2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
South off of Md. 667, on Rehobeth Rd, 5 miles South of U.S. 13			
CITY OR TOWN:		CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:	
Rehobeth		First	
STATE	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
Maryland	24	Somerset	039

3. CLASSIFICATION			
CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Comments _____ _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY			
OWNER'S NAME:			
Trustees of the Rehobeth Presbyterian Church			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
CITY OR TOWN:		STATE:	CODE
Rehobeth		Maryland	24

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION			
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:			
Somerset County Courthouse			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
Somerset Avenue			
CITY OR TOWN:		STATE	CODE
Princess Anne		Maryland	24

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS			
TITLE OF SURVEY:			
DATE OF SURVEY:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Federal <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local			
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
CITY OR TOWN:		STATE:	CODE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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## 7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

In Rehobeth about one fourth mile west of the Pocomoke River stands Rehobeth Presbyterian Church. The simple one-story brick building is three bays wide by three deep. Random glazed headers and stretchers are used throughout the Flemish bond construction. In 1888 the church was remodeled and the original clear glass windows were replaced with the present leaded ones. Also at this time the door moved from the south side to the west end and the pulpit from the north side to the east end. The old pews and galleries were also taken out.

At present the double door in the west central bay is surmounted by a semi-circular fan light with delicate curved muntins. In each flanking bay is a single round-arch leaded glass window. There is a two string belt course between the first floor and gable. There is a six over six light window surmounted by a brick segmental arch centered in both the east and west gables. The church sits on a brick foundation with a simple step watertable made of two square protruding bricks.

The south wall of the church has a single round-arch leaded window in the east and west bays. The original doorway in the central bay has been bricked in.

The north wall has only a single round-arch leaded window in the east and west bays.

The east end has been covered with stucco. It also has a single round-arch leaded glass window in the north and south bays.

Inside, the church has a barrel vault wood ceiling. The box pews have a single raised panel on the ends. The gallery across the west end is also panelled.

A plaque in the entrance hall reads, in part:

"Rehobeth Presbyterian Church: Altered during the nineteenth century but still retaining its ancient brick walls, the present partial restoration was carried out in 1954 and 1955."

Perry, Shaw, Hepburn, and Dean,  
Architects Arthur Southard, Builder.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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## 2. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

☐ Pre-Columbian

☐ 16th Century

☒ 18th Century

☐ 20th Century

☐ 15th Century

☐ 17th Century

☐ 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1706, 1888, 1954-55

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Aboriginal

☐ Prehistoric

☐ Historic

☐ Agriculture

☒ Architecture

☐ Art

☐ Commerce

☐ Communications

☐ Conservation

☐ Education

☐ Engineering

☐ Industry

☐ Invention

☐ Landscape

☐ Architecture

☐ Literature

☐ Military

☐ Music

☐ Political

☒ Religion/Phi-

losophy

☐ Science

☐ Sculpture

☐ Social/Human-

itarian

☐ Theater

☐ Transportation

☐ Urban Planning

☐ Other (Specify)

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Rehobeth Presbyterian Church, erected about 1706, is significant because it is typical of early eighteenth century Maryland church architecture and because its congregation was served in the eighteenth century by the Reverend Francis Makemie (1658-1708), known as the "Father of American Presbyterianism." A long-standing tradition holds that Makemie organized the Rehobeth Church, but the absence of early church records makes it difficult to substantiate this claim. It is known, however, that Makemie preached his first sermons to the Presbyterians in the Rehobeth area upon his arrival in the province, and that he had "a long, if sporadic, relationship [with them]"<sup>1</sup> in the years that followed.

Maryland was a haven for religious dissenters in the colonial period with a policy of religious toleration that was first enunciated by Cecil, second Lord Baltimore, in 1663, and strengthened by the 1649 "Act Concerning Religion." Even after the establishment of the Church of England in 1693 dissenting Protestants were usually allowed to worship freely, although they were taxed to support the official church.

Religious persecution in England and Ireland in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries caused large numbers of Presbyterians to emigrate to America, and many settled in Maryland because of its reputation for religious liberalism. Provincial records indicate that the Reverend Francis Doughty was preaching to Presbyterians in Charles County in 1657; his work was carried on by the Reverend Matthew Hill, who served western Maryland's Presbyterians until about 1679. In the Upper Marlborough area Ninian Beall, a planter and military man,

<sup>1</sup>Boyd S. Schlenther, ed., The Life and Writings of Francis Makemie (Philadelphia: The Presbyterian Historical Society, 1971), p. 18.

(See Continuation Sheet No. 1)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet) #1

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#8 Significance (Continued)

took on the task of ministering to the Presbyterians. "However, no general spread of the doctrines they preached, or organized Presbyterian movement, resulted from their efforts...."<sup>2</sup>

Between 1670 and 1680 the number of Presbyterians in Somerset County, on Maryland's eastern shore, increased considerably, with immigration from the north of Ireland and from Virginia, where there was less tolerance of their religious beliefs. On December 29, 1680, it was recorded by the Presbytery of Laggan in Ireland that "... Colonel Stevens from Maryland beside Virginia his desire of a godly minister is represented to us. The meeting will consider it seriously and do what they can about it ..."<sup>3</sup> It was the request by Colonel Stevens, on behalf of the growing number of Presbyterians in Somerset County, that brought Francis Makemie to America.

Colonel Stevens was an early settler in Somerset County, a wealthy landowner, a county court judge, and a member of His Lordship's Council. Both the town of Rehobeth (established by an Act of the Assembly in 1683) and the Presbyterian church were named after his plantation home, "Rehobeth." A religious liberal, he allowed his home to be used for services by a variety of denominations, and it was at "Rehobeth" that Francis Makemie preached upon his arrival in the Province in 1683.

Francis Makemie was born of Scottish parentage in County Donegal, Ulster, educated at the University of Glasgow, and ordained in 1682. In response to Colonel Stevens request to the Laggan Presbytery, he travelled to America a year later, and was shortly followed by other Presbyterian ministers. The Reverend William Traile, who arrived a few months after Makemie, also preached in the Rehobeth area.

<sup>2</sup>Mary M. North, "The Birthplace of the Presbyterian Church in America, and the Founder," in Maryland Original Research Society of Baltimore, Bulletin #2, ed. by Albert L. Richardson (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1973), p. 22-26.

<sup>3</sup>James H. Lappen, Presbyterians on Delmarva: The History of the New Castle Presbytery (Salisbury, Maryland: By the Author, 1972), p. 1.

(See Continuation Sheet No. 2)

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INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet) # 2

STATE Maryland	
COUNTY Somerset	
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(Number all entries)

#8 Significance (Continued)

The Reverend Thomas Wilson became the pastor of the Manokin Congregation in 1686, and the Reverend Samuel Davis ministered to Presbyterians in the Snow Hill vicinity. "There is no reason to suppose that Wilson and Davis did not actually organize their respective congregations, Manokin and Snow Hill ... (but) Makemie took the leading hand in assisting and watching over these churches following the turn of the century ..." <sup>4</sup>

Makemie spent much of his time in the years between 1683 and 1708 travelling along the coasts of Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, and in the island colony of Barbados in the British West Indies, encouraging new Presbyterian congregations, raising money for their support, and securing ministers for them, with the aid of Presbyterians in London and the Presbytery of Laggan. In a letter to Increase Mather in 1684 he indicated that "he considered it his prime responsibility to find suitable places in the new world for his brethren in Ireland, suffering from religious persecution." <sup>5</sup> Although he settled in Accomack County, Virginia, and spent much of his time in visiting the widespread congregations and in writing, he returned to Rehobeth often to preach, and in 1706 a "new Meeting House" was erected there by the Presbyterians, on land owned by him. In his will he devised the land and the church building to the Rehobeth congregation.

In 1705 Makemie called seven ministers to a meeting in Philadelphia, and it was at this meeting that the Presbytery of Philadelphia, the first American Presbytery, was organized. Of the seven men in attendance, five were ministers who had preached on the eastern shore of Maryland, giving rise to that area's claim that it was "the cradle of Presbyterianism in America." And Francis Makemie, in his twenty-five years in the new world, "had become colonial Presbyterianism's chief exponent, its leading literary apologist, main defender of its liberties, foremost overseer of its congregations, and the moving force in the formation of its first presbytery." <sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Boyd S. Schlenther, ed., The Life and Writings of Francis Makemie (Philadelphia: The Presbyterian Historical Society, 1971), p. 14.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 15

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 28.

(See Continuation Sheet No. 3)

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet) # 3

STATE Maryland S-71	
COUNTY Somerset	
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(Number all entries)

#8 Significance (Continued)

The Boston architectural firm which undertook the restoration of the Rehobeth Presbyterian Church in 1954 was known as Perry, Shaw, and Hepburn in 1927 when it was retained by the Williamsburg Holding Corporation to have charge of the architectural development of the restoration plan for colonial Williamsburg. The firm was involved with this project until 1934, when a local architectural staff was formed at Williamsburg to complete the original restoration program. Perry, Shaw, Hepburn and Dean has continued to serve in an advisory capacity.

#9 Major Bibliographical References (Continued)

- North, Mary M. "The Birthplace of the Presbyterian Church in America, and the Founder." Maryland Original Research Society of Baltimore, Bulletin #2. Edited by Albert L. Richardson. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1973.
- Scharf, J. Thomas History of Maryland Three Volumes. Hatboro: Tradition Press, 1967.
- Schlenther, Boyd S., ed. The Life and Writings of Francis Makemie. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Historical Society, 1971.
- Steiner Bernard C. "Maryland's Religious History." Maryland Historical Magazine, Volume 21 (March, 1926), p. 1-10.

## 9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Lappen, James H. Presbyterians on Delmarva: The History of the New Castle Presbytery. Salisbury, Maryland: By the Author, 1972.

McIlvain, J. William. "Early Presbyterianism in Maryland." Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1891.

(See Continuation Sheet No. 3)

## 10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW.	° ' "	° ' "		38 ° 02 ' 20 "	75 ° 39 ' 53 "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Less than one acre

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

## 11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:		tant	
Ann E. Hill, Summer Intern, and Lois Snyderman, Research Assis-		sh	
ORGANIZATION		DATE	
Maryland Historical Trust		1-31-74	
STREET AND NUMBER			
2525 Riva Road			
CITY OR TOWN:		STATE	
Annapolis		Maryland	
		CODE	
		24	

## 12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

## NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☐ State ☒ Local ☐

Name

Orlando Ridout IV  
Orlando Ridout IV

Title State Historic Preservation Officer

Date May 28, 1974

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Keeper of The National Register

Date \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

S-71

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)

1. NAME COMMON Rehobeth Presbyterian Church		AND/OR HISTORIC	NUMERIC CODE (Assigned by NPS)
2. LOCATION STATE Maryland		COUNTY	TOWN Rehobeth
STREET AND NUMBER South off of Md. 667, on Rehobeth Rd, 5 miles South of U.S, 13			
3. PHOTO REFERENCE PHOTO CREDIT Daniel C. Church		DATE 1967	NEGATIVE FILED AT Maryland Historical Tru 2525 Riva Road, Anna. I
4. IDENTIFICATION DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.			

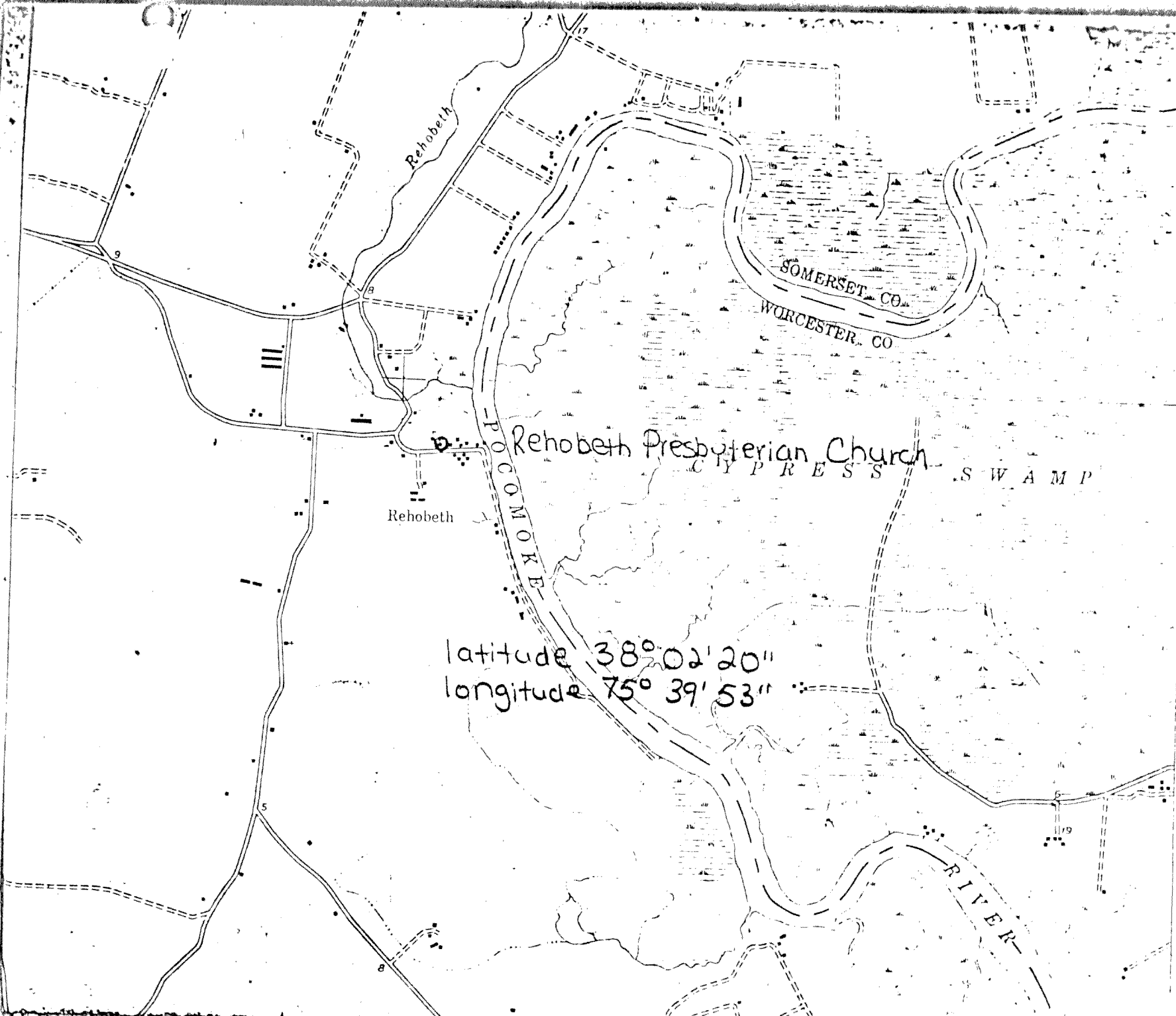
Southeast Elevation.

2000711109

Form 10-445  
(5/62)

1. STATE COUNTY Somerset TOWN Rehobeth VICINITY STREET NO.		HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY INVENTORY	
ORIGINAL OWNER Rehobeth Presbyterian ORIGINAL USE Church Parish PRESENT OWNER Rehobeth Presbyterian PRESENT USE Church Parish WALL CONSTRUCTION Flemish Bond Brick NO. OF STORIES 1½		2. NAME Rehobeth Presbyterian Church S-71 DATE OR PERIOD 1706 STYLE Colonial ARCHITECT BUILDER	
4. NOTABLE FEATURES, HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE AND DESCRIPTION		3. FOR LIBRARY OF CONGRESS USE	
<p>Rehobeth Presbyterian Church is the oldest continually used Presbyterian Church in America. This parish hosted Francis Makemie, the father of Presbyterianism in America, when he came here in 1683. He built the present structure in 1706 on his own land.</p> <p>The church is a simple 1½ storey rectangular structure with an A-roof. Random glazed headers and stretchers are used throughout its construction. It is 3 bays wide and 3 deep. The door now occupies the central bay on the gable end. Before it was remodeled in 1888 the entrance was on the south side of the church. There is a 2 string belt course on the gable ends between the 1st storey and the gable. The church sits on a foundation with a simple step watertable made of two square protruding bricks.</p> <p>In 1888 this church was remodeled and the original clear glass windows were replaced with the present leaded ones. The door was changed at this time as was also the pulpit which was moved from the north to the east side of the building. The old pews and galleries were also taken out.</p> <p>Today the interior of the church is simple and colonial. Box pews of a colonial design have been re-installed and the original arched ceiling is still intact. The interior has been well-maintained and restored.</p>		OPEN TO PUBLIC Yes	
5. PHYSICAL CONDITION OF STRUCTURE    Endangered                      Interior                      Exterior			
Well Kept-up.			
6. LOCATION MAP (Plan Optional)		7. PHOTOGRAPH	
8. PUBLISHED SOURCES (Author, Title, Pages) INTERVIEWS, RECORDS, PHOTOS, ETC.		9. NAME, ADDRESS AND TITLE OF RECORDER Paul A. Brinkman  DATE OF RECORD 8/8/67	

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION AND PHOTOGRAPHS MAY BE ADDED ON SHEET OF SAME SIZE



latitude 38° 02' 20"  
longitude 75° 39' 53"

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Rhobeth Presbyterian Church

S-71



Rehoboth Presbyterian Church S-71

Rehoboth-Somerset County

West Elevation

12/83 Paul Touart

Neg./Md. Historical Trust





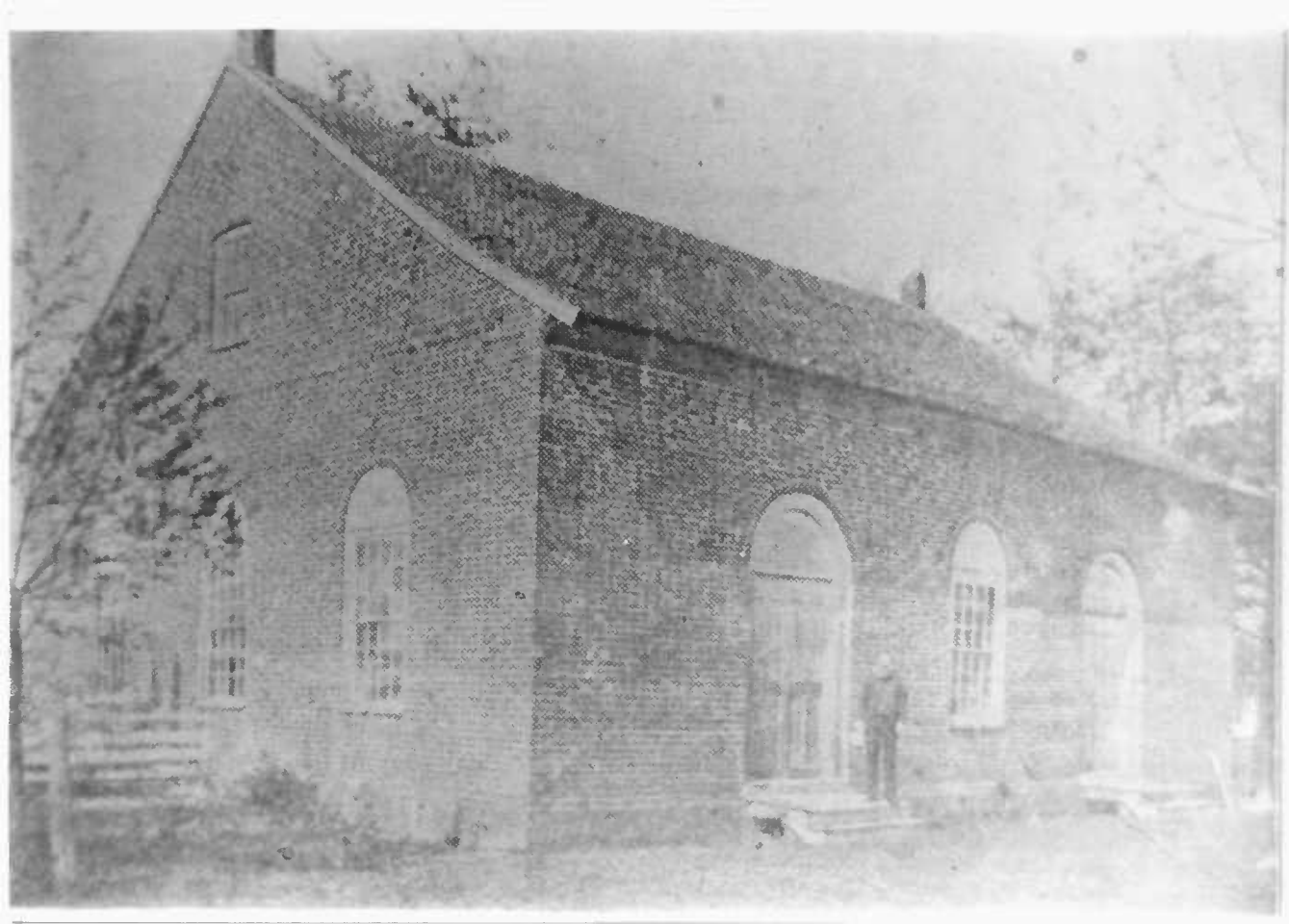
Rehoboth Presbyterian Church S-71

Rehoboth--Somerset County

Southwest Elevation

12/83 Paul Touart

Neg./Md. Historical Trust



Rehobeth Presbyterian Church S-71  
Rehobeth, Somerset Co.,Md.  
Documentary Photograph, c. 1900  
Copied 6/85, Paul Touart  
Neg./Md. Historical Trust



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Rehobeth Presbyterian Church  
Somerset

Photographed by  
DANIEL C. CHURCH